



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
MICHAEL T. MATULAVICH, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2007-039	EFFECTIVE DATE June 25, 2007	RESCINDS P-94-039 Issued 1-2-95 and Addendum Issued 2-7-96
SUBJECT Procedure for Submitting Property or Evidence		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Michael T. Matulavich

I. POLICY

Officers will adhere to the guidelines for submission of all property in order to maintain the integrity of evidence and for the safekeeping of found property.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Destination Location – Where the package will be located immediately after being entered into the system as determined by the officer submitting the evidence.
- B. Evidence/Found Property (EFP) – A template for grouping packages of property and all related owners, finders, victims, arrested, and officers.
- C. EFP Report Number – [two digit year]-[two digit month]-[two digit day]-[four digit unique identifier]
- D. Final storage destination – Property Room and/or any off-site storage facility.
- E. Individual – Any person other than Akron Police personnel, government entity, or business.
- F. Package – Grouping of individual items of property.
- G. Property – Individual item. No more than five property items can be placed in one package.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. The officer who first takes possession of any evidence or found property is responsible for the proper submission of the item in custody.

B. EVIDENCE/FOUND PROPERTY REPORT

- 1. An EFP report must be completed in all cases where property is accepted. All reports will be electronically submitted through the SafetyNet Intranet EFP application.
- 2. In all cases EFP reports will receive an Incident Report number. However, an Incident Report may not be required.

3. Property to be used as evidence will be specifically labeled as such. Property not being used as evidence will be labeled as found.
4. Any unknown information **shall be left blank**.
5. All packages **must** have a predetermined destination location. When the property or evidence reaches its destination location, on duty personnel will accept the package by entering their personal login code thereby taking responsibility for the package. **It is up to the submitting officer to make sure the property has been properly accepted.** The following are the only destination locations for property:
 - a. Bicycle Storage Facility – The submitting officer takes responsibility for accepting storage of packages to this facility.
 - b. Crime Scene Unit, Gang Office, Hit-Skip, Narcotics Office, Pawn, SNUD Office, Vice Office – Officers can accept packages needed to be held in their custody for investigative reasons. Packages must then be routed to a final storage destination. Submitting officer must confirm that the package has been accepted by on duty personnel.
 - c. Detective Bureau Vault – Submitting officer must confirm that package has been accepted by on duty personnel.
 - d. Pit – The pit is located in the basement of the police station in the northwest corner. The Information Desk has the key for the pit. The officer will be given the combination to open the lock on the gate, then use the key to unlock the storage box. The key must be returned immediately to the Information Desk after placing property in the pit.
 - e. Property Not Withheld – Submitting officers wishing to document property that was returned to the owner at the scene or in the field.
 - f. Property Room – Submitting officer must confirm that the package has been accepted by on duty personnel. This location can only be used when the Property Room is open.
 - g. Sally Port – The submitting officer takes responsibility for accepting storage of packages into the sally port. The key to the sally port holding cells is located at the Information Desk. Packages should not be left on the loading docks.
 - h. Seizure Garage – The submitting officer takes responsibility for accepting storage of packages into the seizure garage.
 - i. Tenth Floor Drying Area – The submitting officer takes responsibility for accepting storage of packages into the drying area. It is the submitting officer's responsibility to remove the packages from the drying area and route packages to a final storage destination. **No evidence will be stored in this area.**

- j. Tow Yard – The submitting officer takes responsibility for accepting storage of packages to the tow company. The tow company must be listed in the General Remarks section of the report.
6. All evidence and property brought to a destination location is to be inspected by the on duty personnel to insure that this procedure is being followed. Any item not properly submitted will not be accepted and must be corrected by the submitting officer.

C. PROPERTY RECEIPT FORM AND BCI SUBMISSION FORMS

- 1. A Property Receipt Form is to be issued to anyone turning in any found property they will want to recover, property that will be held for safekeeping or personal property refused by Summit County Jail. The receipt will be made in duplicate, with one copy issued to the finder or owner and one copy placed with the property.
- 2. The Property Receipt Form is the only document that needs to accompany the property or package. All report information will be kept in the Safety Forces Network Database.
- 3. BCI Submission Reports are to be submitted to the Pawn Detail.

D. PACKAGING EVIDENCE AND FOUND PROPERTY

- 1. Due to limited storage space, property should be packaged as small as possible without altering the package label, **allowing enough excess packaging material to facilitate opening and resealing the package for analysis.**
 - a. Heat-sealable plastic pouches or plastic sleeves are the preferred method of packaging property. Once the property is placed in a pouch or sleeve it is the officer's responsibility to verify that all sides of the package are secured. The officer should then initial the heat-sealed area of the package. The EFP label should be affixed to the package.
 - b. Items unable to be heat-sealed in plastic should be secured in paper bags, property envelopes, or cardboard boxes then sealed with approved packaging tape and initialed. The EFP label should be attached to the package.
 - c. Large items may be submitted by attaching a property envelope using string or nylon tie bands. An EFP label must be affixed to the envelope. EFP labels may be affixed to a large item as long as the label will adhere. Large articles should be placed in the sally port holding cells with the doors locked. No evidence is to be left unsecured on the loading dock. A key to the holding cells is available at the Information Desk.
- 2. Any property that has come in contact with a bodily fluid shall be marked as a biohazard.

3. Any evidence or found property that is wet, damp or otherwise contaminated by any moisture source **must** be dried prior to packaging. The only exception to this is when the moisture source is evidentiary. Evidence or property (such as clothing or bedding) that requires extended drying time beyond the end of the officer's work shift will be entered into the EFP by the recovering officer and dried at a secure location.
 - a. Evidence or property, which is wet from water, must be taken to the Crime Scene Unit for drying. The officer placing evidence or property in CSU for drying will be held responsible for proper packaging of the property and placing such items in the Detective Bureau vault or Property Room within ten days.
 - b. Evidence or property which is wet from bodily fluids must be taken to CSU for drying.
 - 1) The officer placing **property** that is not evidence and is contaminated by bodily fluids in CSU for drying will be held responsible for proper packaging of the property and placing such items in the Detective Bureau vault for Property Room within ten days.
 - 2) The Crime Scene Unit detective accepting any **evidence** contaminated by bodily fluids will determine whether the recovering officer or CSU will be responsible for proper packaging of the evidence. If the responsibility to package the evidence falls to CSU, then no follow-up is required by the officer. If the responsibility falls to the officer, that officer will be held responsible for proper packaging of the evidence and placing such items in the Detective Bureau vault or Property Room within ten days.
 - c. Evidence or property which is wet from nonflammable chemical hazards (bleach, pepper spray, etc.) must be taken to the seizure garage for drying. The officer placing evidence or property in the seizure garage for drying will be held responsible for proper packaging of the property and placing such items in the Detective Bureau vault or Property Room within ten days.
 - d. Evidence or property, which is wet from flammable chemical hazards (gasoline, alcohol, etc.) will not be dried in the police station for safety reasons.
 - 1) Evidence or property, which is wet from flammable chemical hazards, must be taken to the seizure garage for drying if the moisture source is **not** evidence. The officer placing evidence or property in the seizure garage for drying will be held responsible for proper packaging of the property and placing such items in the Detective Bureau vault or Property Room within ten days.
 - 2) If the moisture source is evidence, then the evidence or property item must **not** be dried and must be treated as a flammable liquid for packaging.
 - a) If the item is small enough, it will be placed in a lined metal quart or a lined metal gallon container obtained from the Crime Scene Unit.

- b) If the item is not small enough to fit in a lined metal container, it will be placed in an approved packaging container, as determined by and obtained from the Crime Scene Unit.
 - c) If the item is not small enough to fit in a 5-gallon plastic container, a portion of the item should be excised, without disturbing any other evidence on the item, and placed into a lined metal container or 5-gallon plastic container.
 - d) The item may be temporarily packaged in a plastic garbage bag at the scene for transport to CSU.
 - e. Evidence or property of a compressed gas nature (propane tanks, etc.) must be taken to the bicycle storage facility.
- 4. Small amounts of marijuana that have not been dried out can be packaged in ventilated paper bags and accepted at the DB Desk or Property Room.
 - 5. Narcotics or SNUD detectives must be contacted for larger amounts of marijuana that need to be dried out before packaging.

E. PROPERTY GUIDELINES

1. Firearms

- a. All firearms, when possible, shall be rendered safe and open by the submitting officer. This shall be accomplished with the use of nylon tie bands that are available in the Detective Bureau and Crime Scene Unit. The use of rubber gloves is recommended when handling firearms in order to preserve DNA or latent evidence.
- 1) Semi-automatic pistols: The tie band can be inserted through the magazine well and ejector port or through the trigger guard and around the front of the slide.
 - 2) Revolvers: The tie band can be inserted through an empty chamber on the open cylinder, wrapped around the frame of the firearm, and secured. On some revolvers it may be necessary to remove the cylinder and secure it to the frame with the tie band.
 - 3) Rifles and shotguns: The tie band can be inserted through the receiver and ejector port, around the bolt and stock or whatever method is deemed most effective.
 - 4) In order to preserve the ballistic characteristics of a firearm, under no circumstances shall the nylon tie band or any other object be inserted through the barrel of a firearm. Nothing should ever be placed into a firearm that can come into direct contact with the firing pin or mechanism.

- b. When an officer is unable to render a gun safe, a department armorer or Training Bureau personnel will be notified immediately to respond to his location to render the weapon safe. This will be done prior to placing the firearm in the DB vault.
 - c. Any magazine or ammunition found in, with, or near the firearm to be submitted, or related to that firearm, shall be placed in a sleeve, pouch, or cardboard gun box, and secured in the same package. Any other ammunition shall be tagged in a separate package. All holsters, cases, boxes, or other miscellaneous containers shall be packaged separately. No firearm should be packaged inside a case, box, or container other than a designated evidence box.
 - d. All firearms shall be packaged and submitted in one of two ways:
 - 1) Heat-sealed in a clear plastic sleeve or pouch is the preferred method and shall be used for firearms that are dry and not contaminated.
 - 2) White cardboard gun boxes or rifle boxes. This method shall be used for firearms that are wet, contaminated, or must be processed for latent evidence or DNA.
 - e. Under no circumstances will a firearm ever be placed inside a paper evidence envelope, paper bag, or wrapped in any other type of packaging.
2. Weapons – The use of protective gloves is recommended when handling any weapon in order to preserve DNA or latent evidence. Any sharp object that cannot be safely sealed in plastic must be secured in a protective cardboard box and sealed with evidence tape. Items that cannot fit into a box must have the dangerous portion of the object covered with cardboard and secured with approved packaging tape. Larger items may be wrapped in brown paper to preserve DNA or latent evidence.
3. Drugs
- a. All drugs brought into police possession are to be secured and entered into the EFP application prior to the end of the submitting officer's tour of duty.
 - b. Drugs to be destroyed shall be clearly marked as such in the remarks section.
 - c. Seized drugs will be automatically reviewed to determine whether or not they will be analyzed at BCI. Officers with special requests should contact the Narcotics Unit.
 - d. Marijuana or other plant matter to be used for evidence will be analyzed by a certified analyst of the department. These items will be tested on a request basis only.

4. Hypodermic syringes

- a. Hypodermic syringes must be placed in tubes designed to hold syringes. The tube must then be heat-sealed in a plastic pouch or plastic sleeve with the proper label attached.
- b. Sharps containers are available in the event a large seizure is made. They are located in the Detective Bureau vault or the Patrol vault. Do not combine empty syringes with syringes that appear to have content sufficient for analysis or syringes from multiple suspects.

5. Money

- a. Any money totaling one hundred dollars or more must be counted and verified by a destination location officer prior to being sealed. Both the verifying and submitting officer will initial the package on the seal after it has been counted. If the submitting officer is also the accepting officer, then a witness will also verify the count and initial the package.
- b. Dye pack stained money that is still wet shall be entered in the EFP system and then taken to CSU. It is the submitting officer's responsibility to retrieve the money, once dried, and relocate it to the final destination location.

6. Go-carts, motor scooters, minibikes, mopeds, riding lawn mowers, and large automobile parts:

- a. Will be taken to authorized police tow companies.
- b. Property secured at authorized tow companies will require a Towed Auto Report in addition to the EFP Report.
- c. The submitting officer is responsible for affixing an EFP label to the property before his tour of duty is over.

7. Flammable liquids (except alcoholic beverages) – For safety reasons, flammable liquids will not be stored in the police station. If it is needed for evidence, a sample of the liquid should be removed and placed in a lined metal evidence container obtained from the Crime Scene Unit. The empty container, when possible, and the sample container should be placed into the fireproof cabinet that is located in the sally port holding cell. If a firebomb is recovered, it should be photographed before it is moved.

8. Ammunition/fireworks – Large amounts of ammunition or ammunition deemed unsafe, fireworks, gunpowder, or any other volatile substance will be placed in the pit.

9. Found license plates — Require only a yellow tag, located at the Information Desk, completed with all known information and secured to the plate with twine. The plate is then turned over to the Information Desk personnel. No EFP Report is needed for a found license plate unless it is evidence.

10. Alcohol

- a. If an alcohol sample is needed it will be placed into a sample bottle and tightly sealed.
- b. The sample bottle is then placed in a heat-sealable plastic pouch or plastic sleeve and a heat-sealer is used to seal the bag across the middle, forming a liquid tight separate compartment for the bottle.
- c. A photograph of the original container is then placed in the second compartment of the bag and the bag is heat-sealed. This method protects the photograph from any possible leakage and damage from the sample bottle.
- d. A photograph will be taken if no alcohol sample is submitted.

11. Gunshot residue kit

- a. Only one collection kit can be placed in a package.
- b. The owner of the collection kit is the person from whom the sample was taken, **not** the City of Akron or the State of Ohio.
- c. The finder of the collection kit is the officer or detective who obtained the sample from the subject.
- d. Collection kits should be packaged in heat-sealed plastic bags.

12. Sexual assault kit

- a. Sexual assault kits are self-contained and should be treated as a single package. They should not be placed in a package with any other items. The EFP label is placed directly on the box, the box is sealed with approved packaging tape and the seal initialed with the officer's ID number.
- b. The owner of the collection kit is the victim from whom the sample was taken, **not** the City of Akron or the State of Ohio.
- c. The finder of the collection kit is the medical personnel from whom the kit was transferred from at the treatment facility.

13. Buccal/specimen swabs

- a. Buccal swabs are oral swabs used to obtain a known DNA standard
 - 1) Two swabs are used per person, per collection and are packaged in one swab drying box – this is one Buccal Collection Kit.
 - 2) Only one Buccal Collection Kit can be placed in a package. No other evidence will be placed in a package containing a Buccal Collection Kit.
 - 3) The owner of the collection is the person from whom the standard was taken, **not** the City of Akron or the State of Ohio.
 - 4) The finder of the collection kit is the officer or detective who obtained the standard from the subject.
 - 5) All possible case information including the report number, incident location, date, time, standard donor identity, and collecting officer ID should be recorded on the outside of each swab drying box.
 - 6) The collection kit should be packaged in a manila envelope, sealed with approved packaging tape, and the seal initialed with the officer's ID number.
- b. Specimen swabs are swabs used to collect suspected evidentiary material such as blood, semen, etc.
 - 1) One or two swabs are used per specimen collection point and are packaged in one swab drying box – this is one Specimen Collection Kit.
 - 2) Up to five Specimen Collection Kits from the same crime scene may be placed in a package providing that each Specimen Collection Kit is individually packed and sealed into a small manila envelope as a separate item prior to being placed in the larger package envelope. No other evidence will be placed in a package containing a Specimen Collection Kit.
 - 3) The owner of the specimen collection is left blank unless the contributor is known for certain. The City of Akron or the State of Ohio is **not** to be entered as the owner.
 - 4) The finder of the Specimen Collection Kit is the officer or detective who obtained the sample from the scene.
 - 5) All possible case information including the report number, incident location, date, time, specimen location description, and collecting officer ID number should be recorded on the outside of each swab drying box.

- 6) The collection kit should be packaged in a manila envelope, sealed with approved packaging tape, and the seal initialed with the officer's ID number.

14. Print lifts

- a. Fingerprints, palm prints, or bare footprints developed and recovered from a crime scene will be noted on the SFI and then taken to the Crime Scene Unit for examination prior to entering them into the EFP system as evidence.
- b. Upon examination, the CSU detective will determine if the print lifts are of sufficient quality for comparison purposes.
- c. If the print lifts are determined to be of sufficient comparison quality by the CSU detective, the recovering officer will enter the lifts into the EFP system as a separate package and locate it to the Crime Scene Unit. The recovering officer will then release the lifts to CSU and note the acceptance of the lifts on the SFI. The CSU detective will immediately create a case file for the lifts or add them to a related existing case file. The CSU detective will also accept the lifts package from the EFP Package Router.
- d. If the prints on the lifts are determined to be of insufficient comparison quality by the CSU detective, the lifts will be discarded as "nonevidentiary." The disposal of the lifts will be noted on the SFI.
- e. If CSU is closed or no CSU detective is available, the recovering officer will tag the lifts into evidence as a separate package as they would any other evidence. They will then note on the SFI that the prints were tagged into evidence due to the unavailability of a CSU detective. If follow-up on the lift is required by the case detective, then it will be the responsibility of the case detective to notify CSU.

15. Photographs – Should be packaged in paper evidence envelopes and secured only with the metal clasp. These envelopes are not to be sealed by any other means.

16. Bicycles

- a. Bicycles being held as evidence, or if there is a known owner, will be brought to the police station and stored in the sally port holding cells. The submitting officer will affix an EFP label to the bicycle.
- b. All other bicycles will be taken to an off-site storage facility. An EFP Report will be generated and the officer will route the label to the Property Room printer to be affixed later by Property Room personnel.

F. CHECKING OUT AND RETURNING EVIDENCE OR FOUND PROPERTY

1. Any officer who obtains property from the Property Room must sign it out. The property must be secured each day by either returning it to the Property Room or, if the Property Room is closed, taken to the Detective Bureau vault. The accepting officer at the Detective Bureau Desk will relocate that property in the EFP application to the Detective Bureau Desk.
2. Officers that believe their evidence will be admitted into court shall have Property Room personnel prepare the EFP with a "Transfer of Evidence" stamp. Officers shall have the person receiving the evidence sign the EFP Report and return the report to the Property Room.
3. Property will not be taken to the Grand Jury unless it is requested by the Grand Jury or the prosecutor handling the case.
4. When found property or evidence is no longer needed, the owner will be notified. It is the officer's responsibility to notify the Property Room of what can be released. Officers who authorize the release of found property or evidence shall note this authorization in the history pull down section of the EFP application.
5. Officers should make every attempt to find the owner of found property. When an officer is able to do so, the officer should document it in the EFP Report and return the property to the owner.

By Order Of,


Michael T. Matulavich
Chief of Police

Date June 7, 2007